

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7465

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 3502

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, BG

SUBJ: DISTRICT GOVERNORS APPOINTED

1. PRESIDENT SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN JULY 17 ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF THE GOVERNORS FOR THE SIXTY-ONE NEW DISTRICTS. (LAST WEEK MUJIB RAISED THE NUMBER OF DISTRICTS TO 61 BY CREATING A SMALL ENTITY IN MYMENSINGH, REPORTEDLY BECAUSE THE AREA IS ISOLATED IN THE MONSOON SEASON.) THE GOVERNORS INCLUDE 13 CIVIL SERVANTS, ONE ARMY OFFICER, 33 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, AND 14 "OTHER DRAWN FROM AMONG LEADING MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC." OUR PRELIMINARY READING OF THE LIST FOLLOWS.

2. THE MPS LARGELY HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO GOVERN THEIR OWN HOME DISTRICTS. NONE SELECTED HAS NATIONAL STANDING, AND THEY VARY IN REPUTATION FOR COMPETENCE AND INTEGRITY. THE 14 "LEADING MEMBER" APPEAR IN FACT TO BE MOSTLY FORMER AWAMI LEAGUE MEMBERS OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND/OR LOCAL BAKSAL LEADERS. ONLY EXCEPTIONS TO THIS NOTICABLE SO FAR ARE TWO OF THE THREE TRIBAL CHIEFS OF THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS AND ABDUL QAUDER SIDDIQUI OF TANGAIL. "TIGER" CONFIDENTIAL

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SIDDIQUI IS THE MUKHTI BAHINI LEADER WHO MADE WORLD-

WIDE HEADLINES BYEXECUTING ON CAMERA SEVERAL BIHARIS
AT A PUBLIC GATHERING AT THE DACCA RACECOURSE JUST
AS THE LIBERATION WAR WAS ENDING IN 1971.

3. OUR INITIAL REVIEW OF THE CIVIL SERVANTS INDICATES
THAT MOST OF THEM ARE RELATIVELY YOUNG EX-CIVIL
SERVICE OF PAKISTAN OFFICERS NOW SERVING AS DISTRICT
COMMISSIONERS. ONLY TWO HIGH-PLACED CIVIL SERVANTS
HAVE BEEN SELECTED, BOTH FORMER EAST PAKISTAN CIVIL
SERVICE OFFICERS OF LONG SERVICE WHO WERE SUPPORTERS
OF SHEIKH MUJIB BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. OF THESE TWO,
M.A. TAHER, NOW SECRETARY OF LAND REVENUE AND LAND
REFORM, HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO THE KEY POST OF
GOVERNOR OF THE DACCA METROPOLITA DISTRICT. M.
NURUZZAMAN, NOW TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER, IS THE
GOVERNOR-DESIGNATE FOR MAIKGANJ, NEAR DACCA.

4. COMMENT. AS ANTICIPATED, MOST OF THE GOVERNORS
ARE POLITICIANS. HOWEVER, THESE APPOINTMENTS MAY
BE TEMPORARY. ACCORDING TO TWO CIVIL SERVANTS, BOTH
SECRETARIES TO MINISTRIES, THE ESTABLISHMENT DIVISION
HAS PUT OUT THE WORD THAT THE APPOINTMENTS ARE NOT FINAL,
BUT TEMPORARY, AND THAT OTHER CIVIL SERVANTS MAY BE
POSTED OUT AS GOVERNORS LATER. THESE SOURCES ARE NOT
HAPPY OVER THE PROSPECT, AND TAKE THE APPOINTMENT OF
TAHAR AS AN OMINOUS SIGN THAT THEY TOO MAY BE FORCED
INTO A DISTRICT SLOT, WHICH TO THE CIVIL SERVANTS
OF HIGH RANK APPEARS TO BE A BACKWARD STEP TO THEIR
DAYS AS SUBDIVISIONAL OFFICERS.
BOSTER

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